

June 8, 2022

Tom Jameson, Chair
 Brian Abbott Fish Barrier Removal Board
 Department of Fish and Wildlife
 P.O. Box 43200
 Olympia, WA 98504-3200

Re: Letter of Support for three Walla Walla County-Mill Creek passage projects proposed for funding through the Brian Abbott Fish Barrier Removal Board

Dear Chairman Jameson and Members of the Board,

The Walla Walla Basin Advisory Committee (BAC) is writing to you in support of three Walla Walla County Mill Creek fish passage projects proposed by Tri-State Steelheaders Regional Fisheries Enhancement Group (TSS) for funding through the Fish Barrier Removal Board.

These three projects aim to leverage investment to meet multiple benefits for fish passage including addressing low spring flows and high-water temperatures:

1. **Mill Creek Passage-5th Avenue Bridge (21-1432)**, in coordination with the City of Walla Walla, would include removal of the 5th Avenue Bridge and installation of designed fish passage treatments in the concrete flume under the bridge's current footprint to improve water velocities and depths.
2. **Mill Creek Passage Design-Underground Section (21-1433)** seeks to advance existing conceptual designs to final designs for the approximately 1,600 ft of concrete flume that travels underneath Walla Walla. Restoring fish passage to upper Mill Creek provides an important recovery opportunity for ESA-listed fish, as well as good habitat for other native fish and reintroduced spring Chinook.
3. **Mill Creek Passage-Roosevelt Street (21-1431)** would complete final construction ready plans and construction of the uppermost remaining piece of the Mill Creek fish passage project in the concrete flume.

The BAC continues to work to identify and prioritize projects based on decades of watershed planning and current Basin needs which are then vetted through a technical and stakeholder process within the Walla Walla Basin. The BAC and its partners in the Basin seek to leverage and secure funding for high priority projects to accomplish the multiple goals of the Walla Walla Water 2050 Strategic Plan.

The proposed project impact is in direct alignment with the Walla Walla Water 2050 planning effort, led by Washington State Department of Ecology, Oregon Water Resources Department, and the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Reservation. Within that plan, this project supports the implementation of Strategy 1.06: Improve fish passage and habitat conditions in weired and concrete channel sections of flood control project in Mill Creek. Specifically, this proposed project seeks to restore fish passage to upper Mill Creek and increase habitat conditions for Endangered Species Act (ESA) listed steelhead, bull trout, and reintroduced spring Chinook in the flood control channel.

By funding these proposals, you will be investing in an important piece of a Basin-wide strategy for improved water management – you will also be investing in a proven project sponsor in TSS.

Thank you for your consideration of the three Walla Walla County Mill Creek fish passage projects listed above. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Amanda Cronin, Walla Walla Basin Project Manager, amanda@ampinsights.com.

Sincerely,

Walla Walla Basin Advisory Committee